

SOCIAL PROTECTION AS A DEFINING FEATURE OF WELFARE STATE

У статті розглядаються поняття соціальної держави та соціального захисту. Відстежується зв'язок між такими чинниками, як довіра до ключових соціальних інститутів та економічний стан країни, із соціальною захищеністю громадян. Робляться висновки щодо впливу цих чинників на отримання громадянами соціального захисту, оскільки це є першим кроком до створення соціальної держави.

Ключові слова: соціальна держава, соціальний захист, економічний стан, довіра.

В статье рассматриваются понятия социального государства и социальной защиты. Отслеживается связь между такими факторами, как доверие к ключевым социальным институтам и экономическое положение страны, с социальной защищенностью граждан. Делаются выводы относительно влияния этих факторов на получение гражданами социальной защиты, поскольку это является первым шагом к созданию социального государства.

Ключевые слова: социальное государство, социальная защита, экономическое положение, доверие.

The paper explains the concept of a welfare state with regard to social protection as its underlying characteristic. A person's evaluation of the current economic situation in a particular country and his/her trust in core social institutions are analysed as factors determining whether he/she might receive or (have ever received) social protection, e. g. in the form of benefits. The data of the "Ukrainian Society" nationwide survey for the year 2019 provided empirical evidence for the analysis.

Keywords: welfare state, social protection, economic conditions, trust.

A welfare state is a state in which citizens are in a certain connection with it. The state intervenes in the life of citizens as long as their natural rights and freedoms are not concerned. State participation in household life is wide enough. The state is providing social services by redistributing the public good.

There are several models of the social state: Scandinavian, Continental, British, etc.

Continental models are usually associated with countries like Germany, France, Austria and Belgium, which have many social welfare funds. The continental model focuses on the provision of social aid. The main goal of this kind of state is issuing benefits rather than organising social services.

Unlike the continental model, the Scandinavian model considers the state as the main producer of social services, such as education, healthcare, care for children, economically and socially disadvantaged citizens. In most cases, this is the responsibility of the municipalities. Municipal autonomy has always played an important role in the Scandinavian countries.

The British model is characterised by nearly equitable distribution of social security spendings between the private sector (represented by private enterprises and households as its main elements) and the state represented by central and local authorities. In addition to the UK, this model is used in Italy, Portugal and Luxembourg.

The common feature of all these models, which is the main attribute of a social state, is social protection of citizens. Neither in social sciences nor in humanities, there is a single definition of social protection. Different sciences offer a different understanding of this phenomenon. In economic sciences, social protection is associated with the state taking care of citizens, which manifests itself in the form of benefits, allowances, provision of material assistance, services for the sick and elderly, caring for children.

A feature of sociological approach (as opposed to the approaches developed by most representatives of economic and law sciences) is the interconnection of objective and subjective indicators of social protection of the population in the complex, changing conditions of present-day society.

Objective indicators include crime prevention, economic viability, quality of life, social guarantees, etc. The subjective characteristics of social security include a sense of security in the home, city, country, and level of trust in family members, neighbours, authorities, politicians. Since one of the characteristics of a welfare state is the socially oriented construction of the economy and an adequate standard of living, the state is responsible for providing each citizen with a minimum income guaranteeing a decent life.

The state exercises this function through the equitable redistribution of public wealth from the rich to the poor. Usually the cost of living is compiled on the basis of the cost of two hundred items of goods and services that are necessary for an average person. By showing the picture of social security of Ukrainian citizens, we can see how people evaluate the current economic situation in this country.

Table 1

**How would you evaluate the current economic situation in Ukraine?
(Circle the answer where 0 is very bad, 10 is very good)**

0 Very bad	11.6%
1	7.3%
2	14.0%
3	20.8%
4	14.6%
5	15.1%
6	9.1%
7	5.2%
8	1.8%
9	0.3%
10 Very good	0,3%

In this case, it is evident that most citizens (68.3%) evaluate the economic situation as rather bad than good. This fact shows that people do not feel comfortable in terms of provision of material needs, do not feel confident about their future and do not acquire financial support from the state. The socio-economic situation in this country is characterised by social payments, pensions and salaries. You don't even need to ask whether people are satisfied with their salary and whether they have enough money to live on in retirement. The answers will definitely be negative.

As far as trust is concerned, the level of trust in the central government and local authorities, as well as in the police and trade unions, gives a clear understanding whether the state is ready to defend citizens' rights and protect their interests.

*Table 2***How much do you trust the Government?**

Completely distrust	18.9%
Somewhat distrust	27.1%
Difficult to say	36.6%
Somewhat trust	15.3%
Completely trust	2.1%

*Table 3***How much do you trust local authorities?**

Completely distrust	16.9%
Somewhat distrust	26.6%
Difficult to say	28.9%
Somewhat trust	25.1%
Completely trust	2.5%

*Table 4***How much do you trust trade unions?**

Completely distrust	16.5%
Somewhat distrust	24.2%
Difficult to say	36.1%
Somewhat trust	19.7%
Completely trust	3.6%

*Table 5***How much do you trust the police?**

Completely distrust	20.3%
Somewhat distrust	32.4%
Difficult to say	26.1%
Somewhat trust	19.7%
Completely trust	1.4%

According to Sztompka [Sztompka, 1999], people tend to adapt to the decline of trust in various ways: 1) through the submissive acceptance of the situation and belief in fate, God or the Universe; 2) through various forms of corruption (bribery, favouritism, nepotism); 3) by avoiding active forms of social life and focusing

on close friends, family, etc. The result is the destruction of interpersonal relationships within different social groups, the weakness of voluntary associations forming welfare society, the weakening ability of citizens to self-organise for defence against emerging threats.

We can see that at the moment all these signs are present in our country. The loss of trust leads to a split in society, rather than to cohesion that would be necessary for upholding social rights and freedoms. At the same time, social distrust could act as a stimulating factor for social change, but unfortunately, mere initiative is not enough. It is necessary to have a socially oriented market economy and strong trade unions that would protect the citizens.

The analysis of such indicators as the economic situation in this country and trust in the authorities gives us sufficient understanding of the degree of social protection of Ukrainian citizens. Thus, the conclusions on whether our state is social or not can be drawn.

Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, the development of social statehood is the only possible path for a free society that Ukraine strives to achieve.

References

Sztompka, P. (1999). *Trust: A sociological theory*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.